

ALÓRE

VOL. 21, 2012



**ILORIN JOURNAL
OF THE
HUMANITIES**

ISSN: 0794-4551

Alóre: Ilorin Journal of the Humanities publishes papers of about 6000 words from any relevant discipline in the humanities. The journal is published in English but contributions may be made in other languages. For details, see Notes for Contributors.



Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria,
2012

Published by:

The Faculty of Arts University of Ilorin once a year.

Subscription Rates Per Annum:

	USA	CANADA	UK	EUROPE
Individuals:	\$27	C\$30	£12	€18
Institutions:	\$37	C\$38	£20	€25

All orders and remittances should be sent to:

The Editor,

Alóre: Ilorin Journal of the Humanities,

Faculty of Arts,

University of Ilorin,

Ilorin, Nigeria.

Printed by:
TIM-SAL NIG ENT.
Ilorin, Nigeria.
Tel.: 08077787630

EDITOR:

Professor (Mrs.) Victoria A. Alabi

EDITORIAL BOARD:

Professor S.O. Aghalino, Dr. (Mrs.) O. Medubi,
Dr. I.O. Sanusi, Dr. S.O. Ikibe,
Dr. P.O. Abioje, Dr. A. M. Usman,
and Dr. Y. O. Tijani

CONSULTING EDITORS

Professor Domwini D. Kvupole

University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana.

Professor Osayimwense Osa

Virginia State University, USA.

Professor Musiliu Tayo Yahaya

University of Jos, Jos, Nigeria.

Professor Akintunde Akinade

Georgetown University, Qatar.

Professor John Emenugwen

University of Port-Harcourt, Nigeria.

Professor Akintunde Akinyemi

University of Florida in Gainesville, USA.

Notes for Contributors

1. Contributions should be about 6,000 words. They are to be typed double-spaced on one side of the page with adequate margins. Three copies are to be submitted and postage should be enclosed if return of paper is requested.
2. The following details should be noted on paper format:
 - (a) An abstract of not more than one hundred words should accompany each paper.
 - (b) APA referencing style should be employed. Notes should be very minimal and numbered sequentially and grouped together at the end of the paper just before the list of references.
 - (c) Individual authors warrant that their contributions are original and will not infringe upon any copyright or property rights of others and that the works do not contain anything that violates right of privacy.

**All contributions and correspondences
should be addressed to:**

The Editor,

**Alóre: Ilorin Journal of the Humanities,
Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin,
P.M.B. 1515, Ilorin, Nigeria.**

Notes on Contributors

1. Sunday Enesi **Ododo**, Professor, Department of Creative Arts, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria
2. Olaniyi Oladimeji **Kaseem**, Ph.D., Department of Languages and Literary Studies, Kwara State University, Ilorin.
3. Patrick U. **Nwosu**, Ph.D., Department of Religions, Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.
4. Sam **Ukala**, Professor, Department of Theatre Arts Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.
5. Abaya Angulu **Samson**, Ph.D., Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.

- University Press.
- O'Connor, J.D. 1984. *Better Transfer: Cross Linguistic Influence in Language Learning*, Cambridge: CUP.
- Olaniyi, O. 2005. A Systemic Phonological Study of Nigerian English. Unpublished M.A. Thesis. English Department. University of Ilorin.
- Pike, K.L 1947. *The Intonation of American English*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- Pike, K.L. 1962. *Tone Language*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press.
- Roach, P. 1991. *English Phonetics and Phonology: A Practical Course*. 2nd ed. London: Longman.
- Selkirk, E.C. 1982. Syllables in Van der Hulst, H and N. Smith (eds.). *The Structure of the Phonological Representations*. Vol. 2 Dordrecht: Foris 337-383.
- Simo Bobda, A .1995. "The Phonology of Nigerian English and Cameroonian English", in Bamgbose, A., Banjo, A., and Thomas, A., (eds.) *New Englishes. A West African Perspective*, Ibadan: Mosuro.
- Tench, P. 1976. Double Ranks in a Phonological Hierarchy." *Journal of Linguistics* 12:1-20.
- Udofot, I. 2007. "A Tonal Analysis of Standard Nigerian English". In Udofot, I. (ed.) *Journal of the Nigerian English Studies Association*. Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 58-68.
- Ulrike, G.2009. "The Prosody of Nigerian English" <http://www.spectrum.unibielefeld.de/TAPS/Gut.html>

CATHOLIC SOCIAL DOCTRINE AS PANACEA FOR A JUST AND EGALITARIAN AFRICAN SOCIETY WITH FOCUS ON NIGERIA

Patrick U. Nwosu

Department of Religions,
Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Introduction

The reality of a society ordained by God is believed to inculcate the spirit by which the citizens of nations are to be animated in relation to God and to others. It brings about norms or procedures that are integral to culture, as transmitted in customs and traditions. But it has become clear that strange tension engulfs the contemporary society in general and Africa in particular.

Just like other continents, Africa is passing through difficult political, economic and social times. As noted by Pope Benedict XVI, during his recent apostolic visit to Africa,¹ certain values of the traditional society have been overturned. Relationships between different generations have evolved in a way that no longer favours the transmission of accumulated knowledge and inherited wisdom. The quality of facilities is deeply affected by this. Uprooted and fragile members of the younger generation, who often are without gainful jobs, seek to cure their pain by living in ephemeral and man-made paradises². Indeed, social justice is grossly abused and human dignity is rapidly eluding the African society of the 21st century amidst corrupt leadership in many countries. For example, in Nigeria, the mere sickness of the

former president of the country, Musa Shehu Yar' Adua, almost paralyzed the country creating a leadership vacuum³. "African people are now too constrained to flee from themselves and abandon everything that once made up their interior richness".⁴

The thrust of this paper is, therefore to examine the concept of Roman Catholic social doctrine and see how the knowledge of it by the Christians in Africa generally and Nigeria in particular, can enhance the emergence of a just and progressive society. The approach of the paper is historical and analytical. The paper intends to x-tray the history, development and the Biblical basis of the body of teachings on social, economic, political and ecological matters. From these perspectives, we shall draw the implication and responsibilities with which the church is saddled in the 21st century, with the Nigerian situation as a focus.

The History and Development of the Catholic Social Doctrine

The Roman Catholic tradition of bringing faith to bear on social issues classically started with Leo XIII who reigned as pope from 1879 to 1903.⁵ By the end of the nineteenth century, during the reign of Leo XIII, the Industrial Revolution was in high gear, churning out technological inventions such as electric power, the gasoline engine, the automobile, and the telegraph. From the perception of the rich, the world was working and improving. The idea of progress fueled a spirit of liberal optimism. The working class, however, was excluded from all this progress, facing miserable working conditions and wages that were inadequate for the needs of family and disproportionate to the profits of employers. The Roman Catholic Church saw itself as a

bulwark of order and authority under threat from the forces of liberalism and revolutionary chaos.⁶

At the beginning of his papacy, Leo XIII gave the Vatican's stamp of approval to Thomas Aquinas' (1225 - 1274) system of ethics. The ethical theory was based on natural law which basically means that reason can comprehend what God expected us to do. The rationalism predicated on absolute moral principles provided the intellectual foundation for a catholic critique of both laissez-faire capitalism and collectivist socialism⁷. In his landmark encyclical, *The Condition of Labour* (1891), Leo XIII categorically defended the right to private property as a way forward for the working class. He also insisted on the social responsibilities attached to possessing capital, namely the duty to pay workers just wages. The papal teaching centered on capitalism, modernity and socialism.

As a result, the Catholic Church, through her social doctrine established fundamental ties with the socio-political world. Thus, the Catholic Church earned a guaranteed place in the social order as the arbiter of right and wrong.⁸

Major Documents on Catholic Social Doctrine included the following:

Year	Author	Title
1891	Leo XIII	The Condition of Labour
1931	Pius XI	After Forty Years
1961	John XXIII	Christianity and Social Progress
1963	John XXIII	Peace on Earth
1967	Paul VI	On the Development of People
1971	Paul VI	A Call to Action

1975	Paul VI	Evangelization in the Modern World
1981	John Paul II	On Human Work
1987	John Paul II	On Social Concern
1991	John Paul II	On the Hundredth Anniversary
2005	Benedict XVI	On Christian Love
2009	Benedict XVI	Charity in Truth

Biblical Basis of the Social Doctrine

Good Christians have always turned to the Bible as the *magna charter* for their guiding principle and teachings. In so doing, the rich resources of the sacred scripture become blueprints for missionary activities in and for the establishment of a just society. This section of this study is an attempt to capture the impact of that testimony in the light of Catholic social doctrine.

The classical prophets record various passages in which they condemn social injustice in very clear and passionate terms. In Isaiah 3:14 one reads about how God is complaining against public leaders who oppress the poor and the larger society:

The Lord enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people, it is you who have devoured the vineyard, the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

Passages like this received attention at the inception of social and political consciousness in scriptural studies, lending Biblical foundations to the Catholic social doctrine. In this context, there are many works dealing with the relevance of the prophets to social questions⁹. The prophets were never tired of speaking against Israel's errant conscience and the

social implications of the Pentateuch. The code notably prohibited corrupt leadership and violation of human rights.

All the above are aimed at promoting justice, relieving social stress, as well as enthroning human values which Israel had known in the nomadic era. One practice that particularly irked the prophets of social justice was the accumulation of property by wealthy individuals. Added to this, was undue increase in political power. It was against the immoral socio-political rascality that the prophets protested eloquently. In the words of Amos:

They sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, they trample the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and turn aside the way of the afflicted (Amos 2:6ff).

Prophet Isaiah strongly condemned those who increased their wealth unlawfully and those who denied the poor basic amenities (Is. 5:8).

Suffice it to note that the Biblical social prophets decried all manners of injustice, corrupt leaderships, and all forms of evil in their society, thereby laying the foundation of social doctrine. Inspired by this foundation, apparently, the Catholic social doctrine now places the political and social progress under the moral order ordained by God.

Roman Catholic Social Doctrine

According to Henriot, et al., the Roman Catholic social doctrine expresses commitment to a faith that does justice¹⁰. It is a well articulated guideline that accepts the fact that "a living faith leads directly to a loving action in the transformation of the world"¹¹. Within this context, Roman Catholic social doctrine consists largely of truths for social

action fabricated through reading the signs of the times. It may also evolve from a people who, passing through particular experience, work out their social and political truth by allowing their experience to guide their analysis and perception of God¹². This is the case because the Roman Catholic Church sees socio-political relationships and responsibilities as that which stem from a covenant with God. Since it stems from a covenant with God, it develops and undergoes modification, touching new ages, and new problems.

The Roman Catholic social doctrine has about six basic facets. First, the caveat of the teaching is the dignity of the human person. The dignity of the human person here is rooted in the image and likeness of God in each human person regardless of religion or culture. In this regard Burghardt writes that, "From that unique dignity flows significant rights. Not only the right to life but related rights necessary for each one's integral development as a person"¹³.

Second, human beings have not only rights but responsibilities as well. Catholic social doctrine insistently pairs rights and responsibilities. This is particularly so because, most times, people's clamor for human rights threatens and pushes responsibilities to the background. Third, the Roman Catholic social doctrine maintains that the soul of the community is the family. The teaching insists that the family deserves special protection, especially in a culture where the traditional family structure is threatened by modernism and extreme secularism.

Furthermore, Catholic social doctrine makes a preferential option for the disadvantaged, the poor and the forgotten. This is inspired by Psalm 72 and it is what God

demands from political leaders at all times.

Fifth, is solidarity. For, as Edward Arroyo has succinctly phrased it, "if interdependence is an accurate description of our modern world, then solidarity is the appropriate Christian response to this reality."¹⁴ Thus, Catholic social doctrine challenges people to overcome barriers of race and religion, of ethnicity and gender, of economic status and nationality.

The sixth principle of Catholic social doctrine is care for nonhuman creation. This derives from the fact that creation cannot be separated from redemption. To recognize this fact, Catholic social doctrine as well witnesses to ecological awareness. Thus, there are Catholic ecologists like Thomas Berry, who have argued that if we lose the environment, we lose God.¹⁵

In the light of the above, Catholic social doctrine refers to the documents issued by those who hold official teaching positions in the Roman Catholic Church, that is, by the bishops and the pope. The documents are spirit-guided with varying degrees of significance to every society, particularly the Nigerian society.

People in general face the challenge of adjusting to new ideas and popular participation in the affairs of politics, economics, and other social realities. And the Catholic Church in particular would always choose to assert the necessity for order and hierarchy backed by a divinely constituted authority with the ability to announce and enforce the demands of God and nature. Thus, this interplay between nation-state and the church provides the basic platform for the emergence of Catholic social doctrine. As O'Brien and Shannon observed,

what held society together and gave it ethical discipline and coherence was a theory of social obligation that sprang from the very nature of society and was related to a hierarchical universe presided over by God. Social obligations thus took priority over individual desires and wants.¹⁶

That observation is justified by the fact that an organic social theory, supported by emerging ideas of natural law, provided a strong foundation for the specification, by the church, of rules governing social and economic activities oriented toward the efficient and equitable sharing of scarce resources. Catholic social doctrine, as in all other Christian teachings, "begins with the person and message of Jesus".¹⁷ Jesus, not being a political or economic messiah, proclaimed the Kingdom of God and is believed to have saved people from corruption and sin through the shedding of his blood.

Contextualization and Implication

In the Nigerian society today, the conception of progress and improvement is remarkably similar to that of the Industrial Revolution. There is the uncontrollable urge to become big. Nigerians want big cars, big buildings, chieftaincy titles, numerous awards, and chains of businesses especially in the oil and gas sector. This negative pull of the culture of the Nigerian society today is turning human beings into cogs and commodities. The result is the loss of personal dignity and community sensitivity culminating in depraved behaviours¹⁸ like child labour, kidnapping, ritual killing, prostitution and so on. Thus, the prevailing economic, political and social dispositions in the contemporary Nigerian society have lost every sense of spiritual discipline. Within

this context, Catholic social doctrine castigates and denounces structures of injustice, gaping inequality and gross human right abuses that characterize much of the Nigerian population today.

Furthermore, Nigeria and Nigerians are actively part of the movement for democracy that would guarantee trust in various institutions in the country. Recently, Nigeria witnessed the emergence of the civil society called "Save Nigeria Group." The remote cause of its emergence can be traced to the incessant police brutality, illegal killings, the collapse of trust in the judiciary, the rise of criminal gangs and the spread of violence and insecurity in the land and the increase in corruption.¹⁹ As laudable as the struggle for a just and egalitarian society may be, the Roman Catholic social doctrine insists that rights go with responsibilities. In fact, Benedict XVI argues that work for a progressive society is a major obligation of every citizen of a country. In this regard, it becomes evident that a lot of problems Nigeria still faces are related to the inability of most Nigerians to take responsibilities especially in their immediate environment.

For example, in most parts of the country, flood and refuse dumps threaten people because they do not obey basic environmental rules. Some houses are built without approval from the appropriate authorities and people throw refuse inside drainages thereby blocking them. In the light of the Catholic social doctrine, each person has the responsibility to love the nation, to love one another and cherish the environment.

Again, in Nigeria, as in most other parts of Africa the issues of bride-money, expensive wedding, contraception, abortion and pornography impact negatively on the family

institution which the Catholic social doctrine describes as the soul of the community. In this light, Isiramen rightly observes that,

sexually explicit magazines are openly displayed on the shelves or stores and pornographic films are consumed by both old and young. Companies' internal policies and practices hardly take into consideration the family and the community.²⁰

In consequence, the Catholic social doctrine is a reminder that the family deserves special protection, particularly in a society like Nigeria where leaders misappropriate public wealth and oppress the younger ones with their flashy lifestyle. Through the teaching there would be greater awareness of the need to uphold the fundamental principles of the family institution predicated on the rights of the unborn, of children, of the aging and so on.

The symptoms of total neglect of the poor and disadvantaged, reflecting Nigeria's naïve political and social systems, became yet a hopeless matter when the media reported cases of cholera spread in Bauchi, Borno, Lagos, and Yobe States. Among other things, the media quoted Adamu Isa, the State Coordinator of the World Health Organization (WHO), as saying that,

the situation was worsened due to lack of Public Health Laboratory (PHL) in the entire North East sub region for staining and to carry out culture and sensitivity to ascertain whether or not it is gastro-enteritis or cholera²¹.

Christian commitment here requires a method or framework to regularly examine structural systems that allow

for social injustice and neglect of the powerless in the society. The Catholic social doctrine has a significant weight in this regard since it emanates from the teaching office of the pope. The doctrine constantly emphasizes that justice is the virtue central to social issues and an egalitarian society.

There is massive looting of Nigeria's resources by a small but active band of desperadoes in the corridor of power. There is stealing in both upstream and downstream Nigerian oil sectors. From the presidency to the legislature, down to the public and private sectors, the story is the same. Corrupt practices are everywhere. All the people involved are adherents of either Islam, Christianity or Afrel (African Religion) with little or no knowledge of the principles of Catholic social doctrine. This is in line with the observation by Peter Henriot et al., that, "the Church has a developed body of teaching on social, economic, political, and cultural matters and what that body says seems to have never been known by a majority of the Roman Catholic Communities..."²². Unfortunately, Catholic social doctrine seems not to be among the issues that receive sustained attention either in the secular or Catholic media. Thus, Catholic social doctrine still remains outside the main stream of ordinary Christian life.

About 40 per cent of political leaders in Nigeria profess Christianity, yet the country's resources are being serially mismanaged to the detriment of the larger population. The country is in a sorry state, with over 50 per cent of its people uneducated; more than 50 per cent having no access to water, electricity and other means of good livelihood.²³ Yet the opening lines of "The Church in the Modern World" of Vatican II states that without good leadership, we do not have

true Gospel living. According to the document,

the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the women and men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way oppressed, these are the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties of the followers of Christ.²⁴

One would think it is the responsibility of the Church in Africa, through various bishop conferences, to shout the louder the Church's social teaching in the face of today's bad governance and corrupt practices. The social consciousness and concern in the Church, as regards the state of nations, have to grow and expand the Catholic social doctrine in an effort to spell out what it means to take up the "joys and hopes" of the citizens of various countries of Africa, particularly Nigeria.

In Nigeria, it would seem that the insincere approach to governance has led to non-provision of the basic needs for the people, and social services are provided in highly unbalanced ways. The current federal legislature rework the budget and shares billions of Naira into so-called "constituency allocations".²⁵ Sola Adeyeye, a Professor and former Representative, has said that if Nigerians truly know what legislators take away from the Assembly, they would stone the legislators.²⁶

The social doctrine of the Catholic Church as contained in the papal encyclicals and other documents of the Church implies that the Church in Africa must carry on the fight against the ills of the contemporary society. In other words, the Christians, especially in Nigeria must see it as an urgent mission to preach and practice the principles of social justice in line with the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the ultimate reason why the Church exists is the salvation of all people, regardless of colour or language. Since this redemption is a gamble of the earthly life, and it hinges not only on internal dispositions but also on conformity with nations' constitutions prescribed for human relation, the Catholic Church in particular outlines general principles that address what is morally wrong in social institutions regardless of the people who are involved. Here again, *Gaudium et Spes* re-echoes:

But it is always legitimate for the Church..., to teach her social doctrine, and to discharge her duty among men without hindrance. She also has the right to pass moral judgment, even on matters touching the political order, whenever basic personal rights of the salvation of souls make such judgment necessary.²⁷

In line with the scriptures and the apostolic tradition, the Roman Catholic Church outlines principles of peace, justice, politics, economic, culture and general concerns that could help governments to aspire towards economic and social justice for all. This body of knowledge exists as noted earlier and it is known as catholic social doctrine. However, the knowledge and teaching of this doctrine remains an inescapable pastoral responsibility of church leaders and members. It is a challenge for Christians to know about it, teach it and live it out. By so doing, the dream for economic and social justice for all may be realized on earth.

Notes and References

1. The Holy Father, Benedict XVI made Apostolic pilgrimage to Yaounde, Cameroon, and Luanda, Angola, from 17 to 23 March, 2009.
2. Benedict XVI, *L'Osservatore Romano*, Wednesday, 25 March 2009, p. 9.
3. *This Day*, Sunday, December 13, 2009.
4. Benedict XVI, *L'Osservatore Romano*, p. 9.
5. William J. La Due, *The Chair of St. Peter: A History of the Papacy*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1999), p. 249.
6. David J. O'Brien, "A Century of Catholic Social Teaching: Context and Comments," In: John A. Coleman (ed.), *One Hundred Years of Catholic Social Thought*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), pp. 14-15.
7. *Ibid*, pp. 16-18.
8. Curt Cadorette, *Catholicism in Social and Historical Contexts: An Introduction*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2009), p. 188.
9. Some of the works on the relevance of the prophets also highlights the Biblical Foundations of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church. Works like the following: Anthony R. Ceresko, *Introduction to the Old Testament: A Liberation Perspective*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1997).
George V. Pixley, *On Exodus: A Liberation Perspective*, (New York: Orbis books, 1987).
Gustavo Gutierrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1999).
Daniel Berrigan, *Ezekiel: Vision in the Dust*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1997).
Albert Nolan, *Jesus before Christianity*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1991).
10. Peter J. Henriot, et al., *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*, (Washington: Center of Concern Press, 1999), p. 5.

11. Peter J. Henriot, et al., p. 6.
12. Walter J. Burghardt, *Justice: A Global Adventure*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), p. 244.
13. Burghardt, pp. 25-26.
14. Edward B. Arroyo, "Solidarity: A Moral Imperative for an Independent Word," *Blueprint for Social Justice* 42, No. 1 (September 1998).
15. Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth*, (San Francisco: Sierra Club, 1988), p.44.
16. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (eds.), *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 3.
17. David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon (eds.), p.2.
18. Celestine O. Isiramen (ed.), *Religion and the Nigerian Nations: Some Topical Issues*, (Ibadan: En-Joy Press and Books, 2010), p. XI.
19. Mathew Kuka, *Human Rights in Nigeria: Hopes and Hindrances*, (Aachen: mission Press, 2003), p. 15.
20. C. Isiramen, "The African Traditional Religion's Business Ethics: A Paradigm in the Global Business Ethical Standard," In: N. Capaldi (ed.), *Business and Religion: a Clash of Civilization?* (Salem: M and M Scrivener Press, 2005), pp. 392-393.
21. Njadvara Musa, *The Guardian*, August 25, 2010, p. 3. See also *The Guardian*, August 23, 2010.
22. Peter J. Henriot, et al., p. 3.
23. *The Guardian*, Monday, April 6, 2009.
24. Austin Flannery (ed.), *Vatican II Document: Gaudium et Spes*, (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1975), p. 903.
25. *The Guardian*, Sunday, April 5, 2009.
26. *The Guardian*, Monday, April 6, 2009.
27. Austin Flannery (ed.), p. 910.